REPRODUCTIONS

OF

PRINTS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THIRD SERIES

PART III

SPECIMENS OF ETCHING

BY

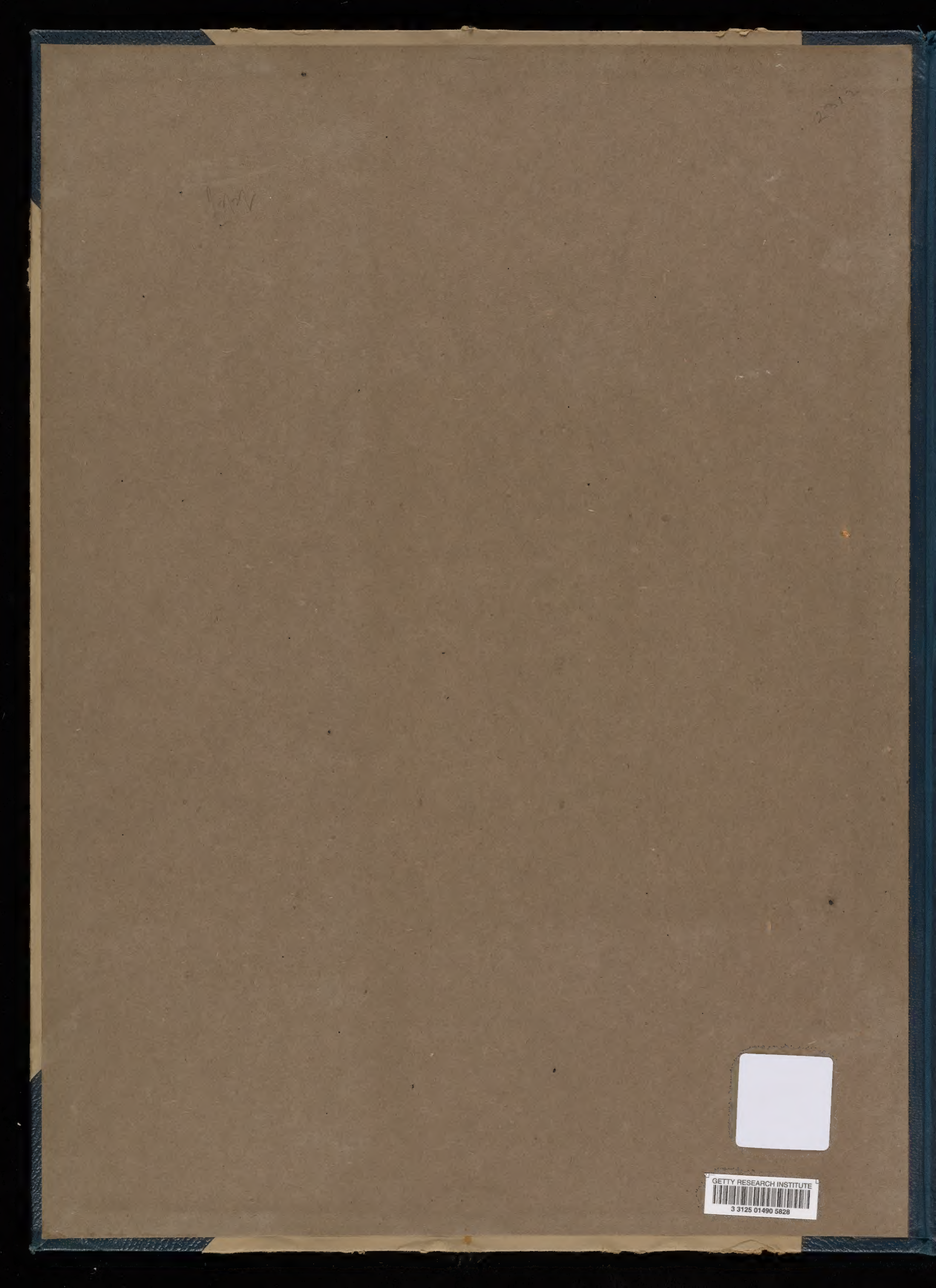
FRENCH MASTERS

1620-1670



PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES

1909


GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
3 3125 01490 5828

REPRODUCTIONS

OF

PRINTS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THIRD SERIES

PART III

SPECIMENS OF ETCHING

BY

FRENCH MASTERS

1620–1670



PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES

1909

SPECIMENS OF FRENCH ETCHING
1620—1670

In Part II of the present series the rapid and facile methods of the Italian etchers of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries were illustrated by examples chiefly of the schools of Venice, Parma, and Bologna. The present Part represents the craft as practised in France, or by artists of French (in three cases more strictly Lorrain) birth living in Italy, in the second and third quarters of the seventeenth century.

In the sixteenth century etching had been little used in France except by the architect Androuet du Cerceau in his various sets of designs for buildings, fittings, and decoration. We have not reproduced any of these, but begin with a single example by a second-rate master of Nancy, Jacques Bellangé (1594-1638), who followed the technical style of the Italians in a number of Madonnas and Holy Women, a Death of Virginia, etc., equally affected in feeling and mannered in drawing; among which this subject of a woman seated by a brazier (I) is a fairly agreeable exception. Other and more important French etchers of the same date adopted a manner very different from that prevailing in Italy. Instead of aiming at a sketchy ease and lightness of touch, Jacques Callot (1592-1635) and Abraham Bosse (1602-1676), the latter more especially, sought for exactly the opposite qualities, and valued their etched line above all for the degree to which they could make it approximate to the severity and purity of an engraved line. They both drew on the copper through a hard varnish; they both aimed, in the use of the needle and the *échoppe*, at drawing lines of an even flow and regularity, each line varied in depth and breadth along its course in the manner natural to line-engraving but foreign to the true and characteristic technique of the etcher.

Callot was so vivacious an observer of life, and so incisive, vigorous, and delicate a draughtsman, that even this relatively rigid technique became pliable in his hands. Whether on a minute or a larger scale, whether in the rendering of single figures or crowds or landscape or architecture, or all combined, he was able to obtain results the most animated and expressive. He does not attempt such special effects of light and shade and mystery, by devices of printing and biting and the use of the dry point and of burr, as Rembrandt developed a few years after him in Holland; but wipes and prints his plates clean and straightforwardly like line-engravings; and within the limits which this method imposes the effects of aerial gradation in his backgrounds are subtle and unfailing. The twelve plates here reproduced from his work illustrate adequately its various phases. II and III are little allegorical figures, which he conceived and drew with almost as much animation as if they had been figures of real life; IV, V, VI illustrate his portrait work, and show him at his nearest in aim and manner to the line-engravers; VII reproduces three subjects from a set depicting with poignant dramatic effect the miseries of war, which his wandering life in Lorraine and Italy had given him too frequent and heart-rending occasion to observe; VIII shows a contrasted side of contemporary life in the shape of a village festival, with the seigneur and his family looking on; IX and X are costume and character studies from a series of fine gentlemen and ladies; XI and XII from a much more interesting series of beggars and cripples, both men and women, which in their day made a profound impression on Rembrandt and greatly influenced his early work; XIII is a fine and well-known example of the master's manner in topographical, architectural, and landscape work.

Next come six specimens (XIV-XIX) of the work in etching of Claude Gellée (1600-1682), like Callot a native of Lorraine, but established more permanently in Italy. At various times of his life this great and masterly painter and draughtsman of landscape and atmospheric effect tried his hand almost as an amateur with the needle and bath. He never attempted the graver-like precision which was the aim of Callot and Bosse; nor was he at any time very certain of his technique in the etcher's proper methods; so that some of his plates are faultily bitten and some of his intended gradations miss their effect. But his innate and trained genius for expressing the massing and movement of foliage, the glow and play of mellow afternoon light on land and sea, the sentiment of classic and pastoral landscape, and the relation of figures and animals to their environment of Roman scenery, give a singular charm to these experiments with an instrument of which he was not perfectly master.

Coming to Abraham Bosse (1602-1676), we find the technique of Callot stiffening and becoming more mechanical in his hands. He reduced the practice of graver-like etching to a theory, and wrote a treatise fully explaining and illustrating his methods. He harps continually on the quality of *netteté* in the lines as that to be aimed at above all things, and in order to secure this quality it was his habit in much of his etched work to reinforce his bitten lines with the graver. His plates, therefore, although nominally, and according to the claim usually made for them in his own inscriptions, executed *à l'eau forte*, have really little in common with those of the craftsmen, whether in Italy or the Low Countries, who developed that technique fully along its appropriate and natural lines. His work has however solid and crisp executive qualities of its own, in harmony with the master's vigorous if somewhat pedantic modes of vision and invention, and as such could not be omitted from any series illustrating the history and varieties of the art. XX shows the first state of an attractive little plate usually printed with a border designed as if for decorating a casket. XXI, forcible, but without charm or mystery, in its effects of light and shadow, represents the vigil of the wise Virgins with their filled and trimmed lamps, and is one of a series illustrating the parable. XXII, XXIII, and XXIV are from sets of the Four Seasons and the Four Elements respectively; the former are very characteristic examples of the qualities which make of Bosse one of the most telling and trustworthy illustrators of contemporary fashions and manners. In XXV we have a very interesting and life-like picture of the processes of preparing, passing under the press, and drying a set of prints in the workshop of a line-engraver.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

I

JACQUES BELLANGÉ

(1594-1638)

Woman with brazier

II

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

(a) Pride
(b) Gluttony — From a set of the Seven Deadly Sins

III

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

(a) Envy
(b) Anger — From a set of the Seven Deadly Sins

IV

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

Portrait of Cosmo II, Duke of Tuscany

V

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

Portrait of Donato dell' Antella

VI

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

Portrait of Claude Deruet

VII

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

THREE FROM A SET ILLUSTRATING THE MISERIES OF WAR

VIII

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

A VILLAGE DANCE

IX

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

(A), (B) TWO FROM A SET OF GENTLEMEN

X

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

(A), (B) TWO FROM A SET OF LADIES

XI

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

(A), (B) TWO FROM A SET OF BEGGAR-MEN

XII

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

(A), (B) TWO FROM A SET OF BEGGAR-WOMEN

XIII

JACQUES CALLOT

(1592-1635)

View of the Louvre and the Seine from the left bank

XIV

CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN)

(1600-1682)

The Cow-Herd

XV

CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN)

(1600 1682)

Harbour with Lighthouse

XVI

CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN)

(1600 1682)

Herd going to the Fields

XVII

CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN)

(1600-1682)

Time, Apollo, and the Seasons

XVIII

CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN)

(1600 1682)

Rape of Europa

XIX

CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN)

(1600-1682)

Landscape with Seven Goats

XX

ABRAHAM BOSSE

(1602-1676)

The Expulsion of Adam and Eve

XXI

ABRAHAM BOSSE

(1602-1676)

The Wise Virgins. One of a set

XXII

ABRAHAM BOSSE

(1602-1676)

Summer. From a set of the Seasons

XXIII

ABRAHAM BOSSE

(1602-1676)

Winter. From a set of the Seasons

XXIV

ABRAHAM BOSSE

(1602-1676)

Earth. From a set of the Elements

XXV

ABRAHAM BOSSE

(1602 1676)

PRINTING-ROOM AT A LINE-ENGRAVER'S



JACQUES BELLANGE

Woman with brazier

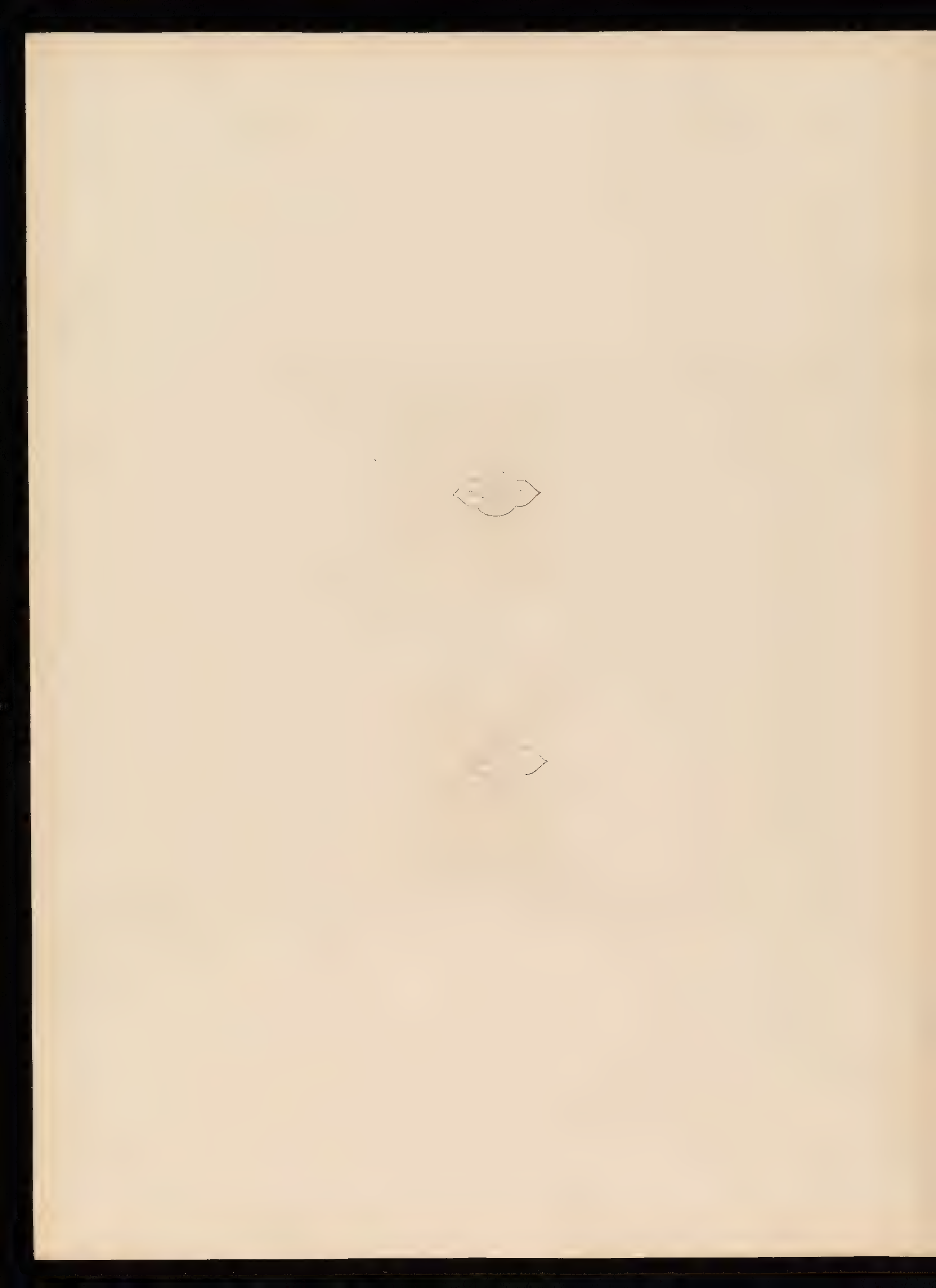






1 JACQUES CALLOT.

(A) Pride } from a set of the Seven Deadly Sins
(B) Gluttony

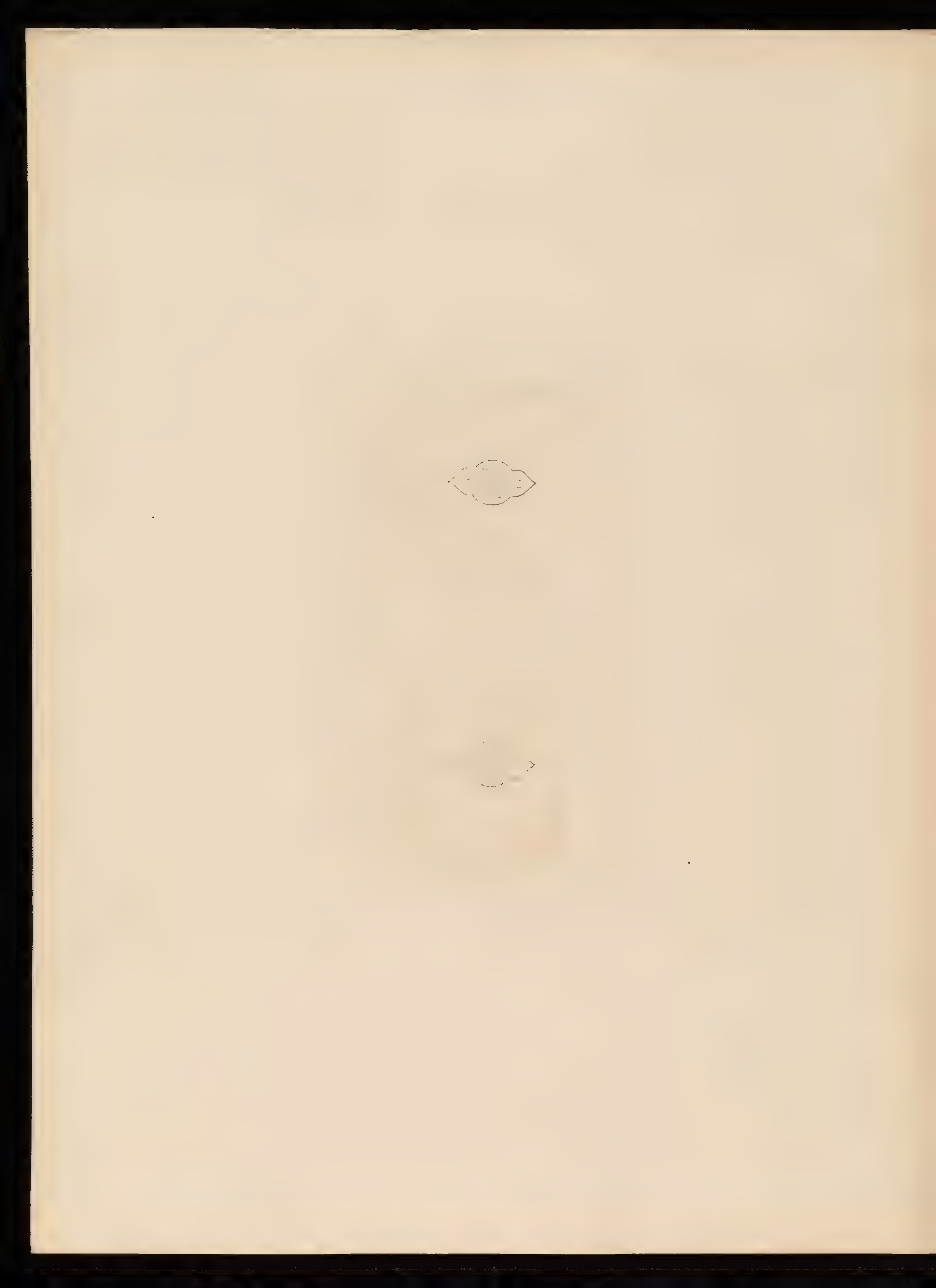






III. JACQUES CALLOT.

(A) Envy | from a set of the Seven Deadly Sins
(B) Anger |

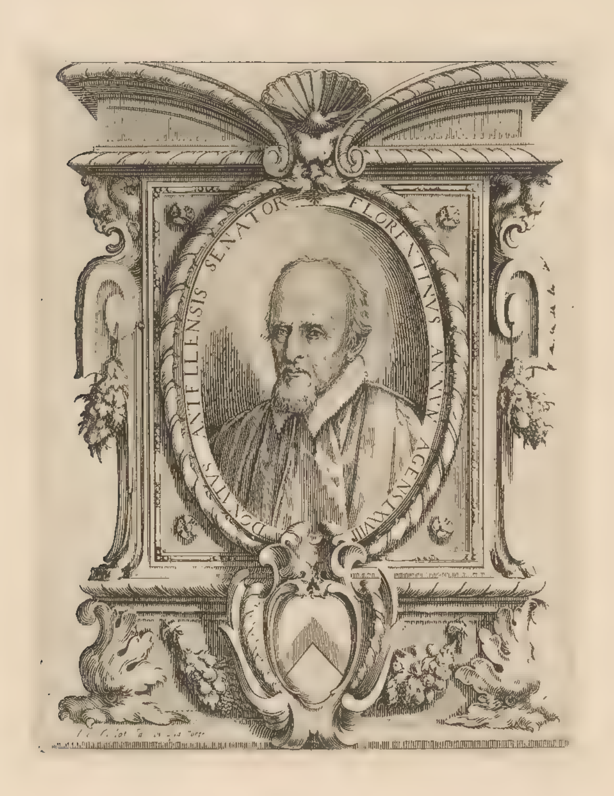




IV JACQUES CALLOT

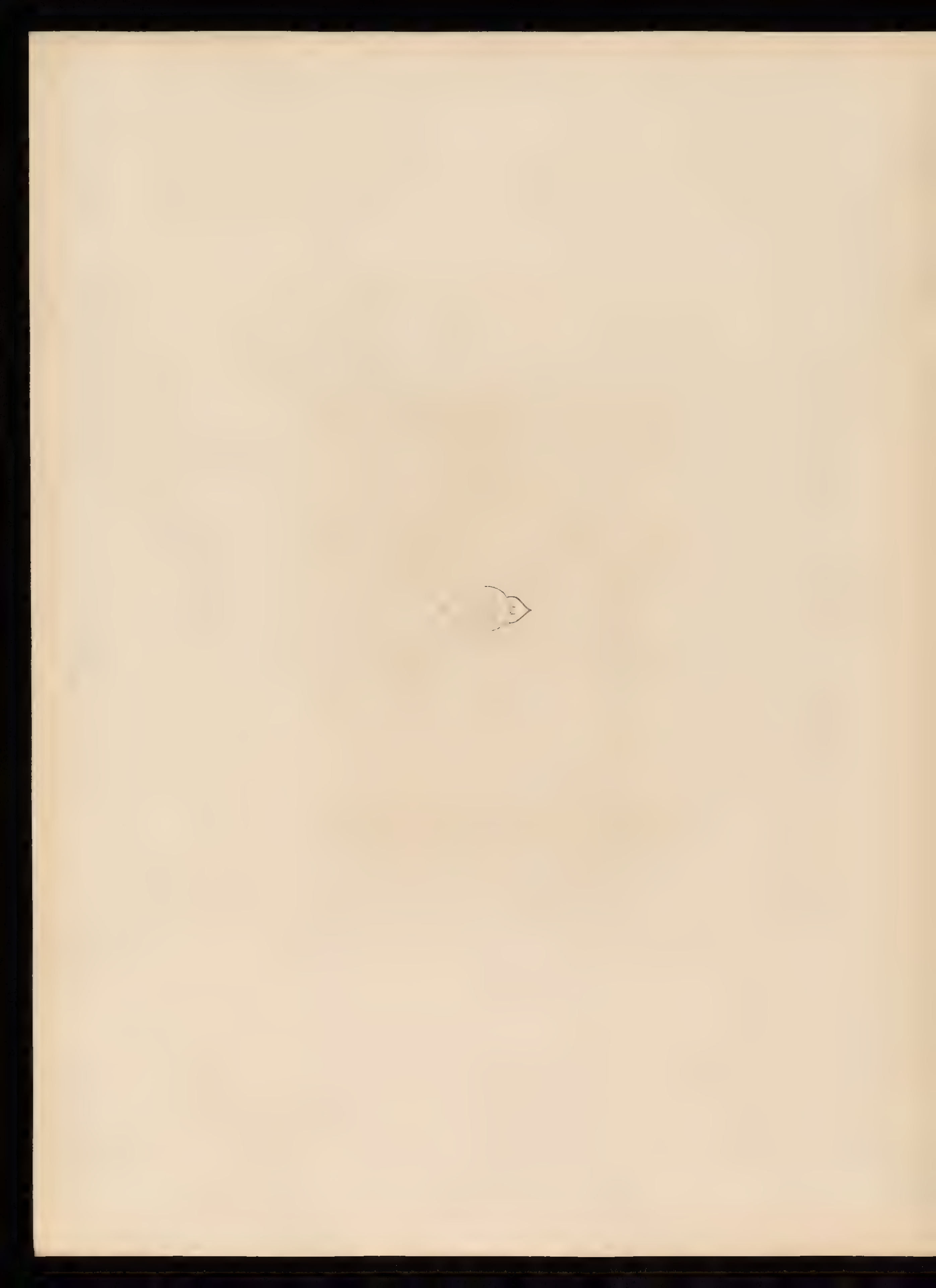
Portrait of Cosmo II. Duke of Tuscany





V JACQUES CALLOT.

Portrait of Donato dell' Antella.





VI. JACQUES CALLOT.

Portrait of Claude Deruet.







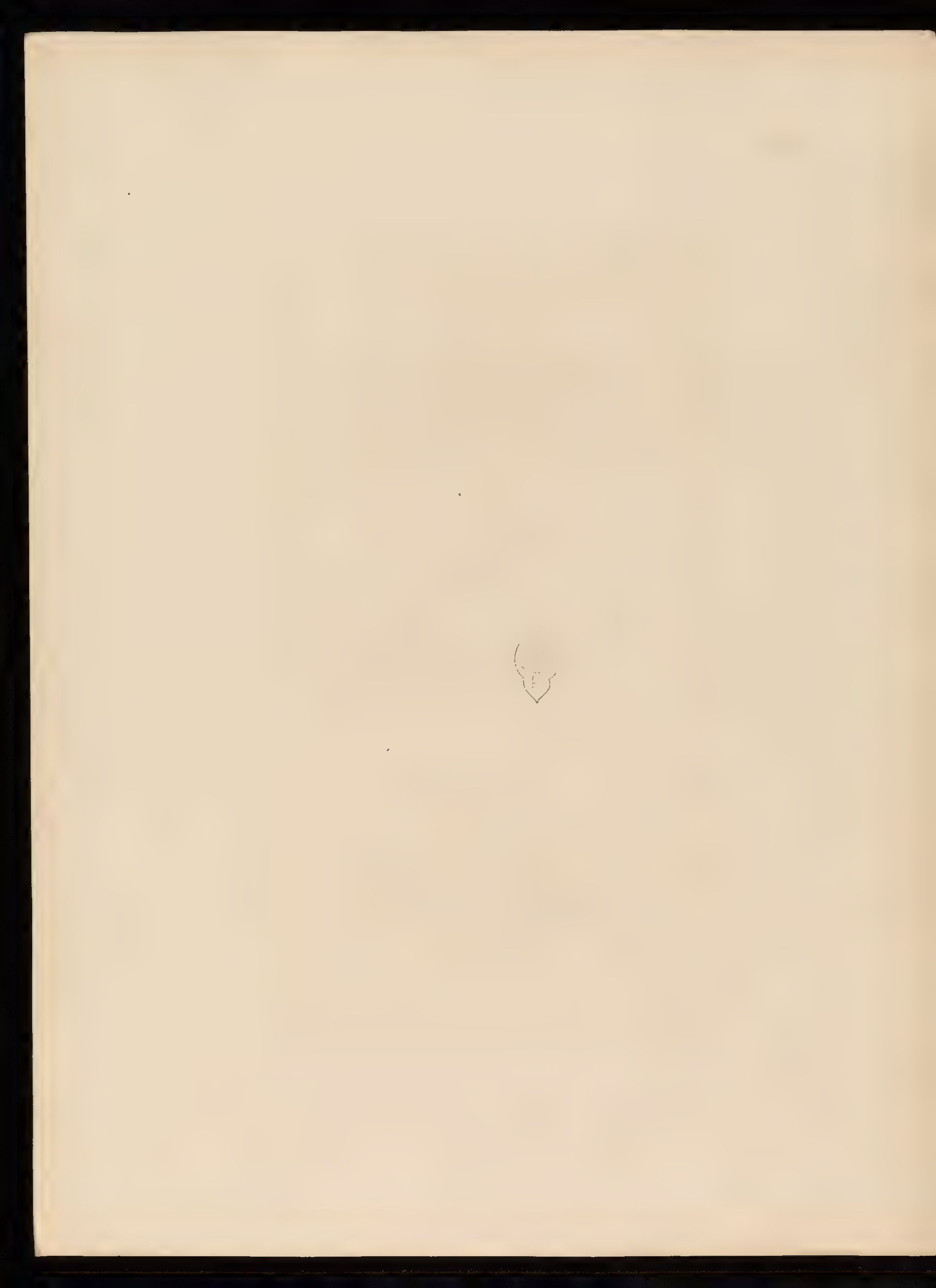
VII. JACQUES CALLOT.

Three from a set illustrating the Miseries of War.





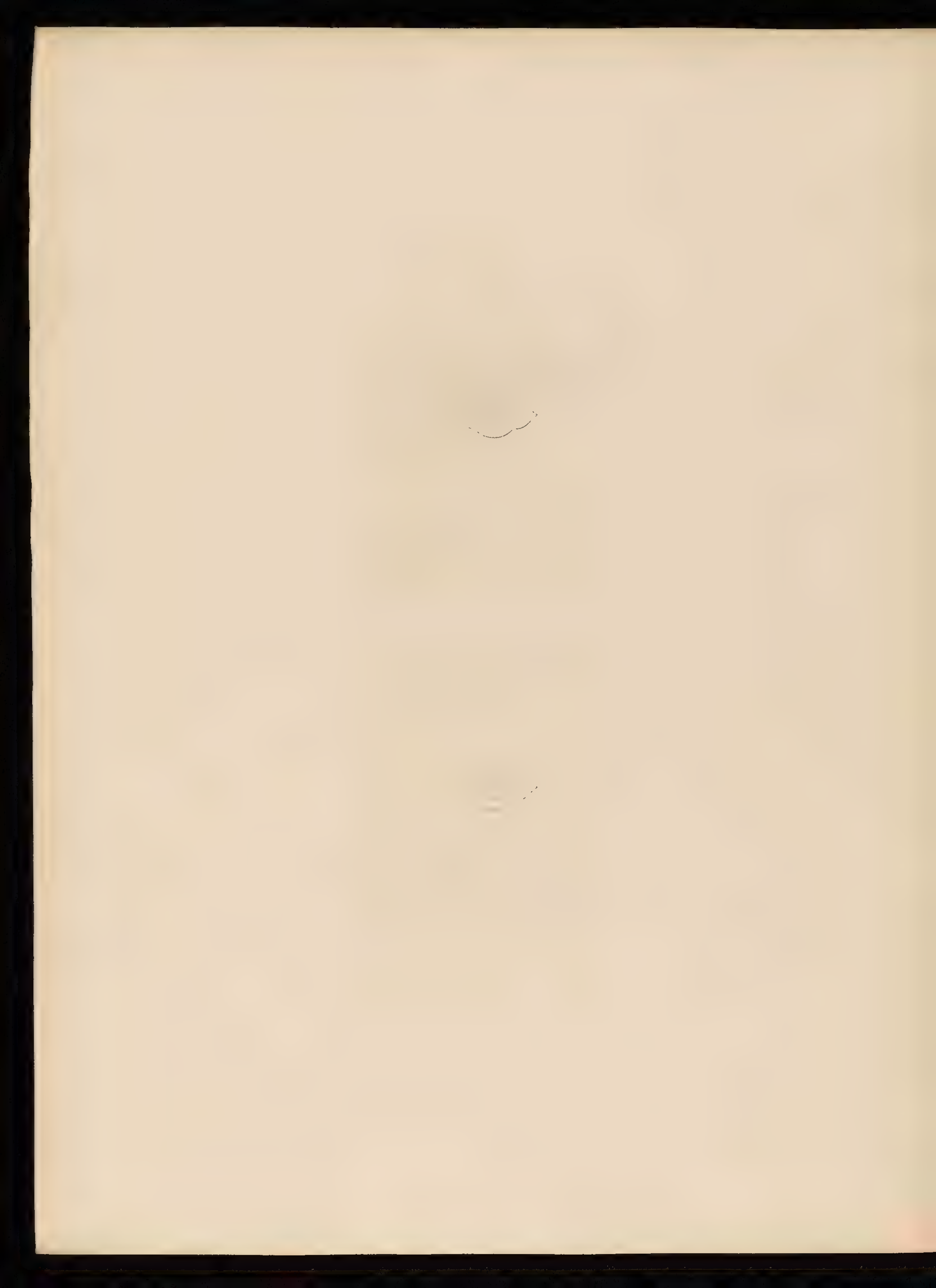
VIII. JACQUES CALLOT.
A Village Dance.







IX. JACQUES CALLOT
Two from a set of Gentlemen.







X JACQUES CALLOT

Two from a set of Ladies







XI. JACQUES CALLOT.

Two from a set of Beggar Men







XII. JACQUES CALLOT.

Two from a set of Beggar Women.





XIII. JACQUES CALLOT.

View of the Louvre and the Seine from the left bank.



XIV. CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN)

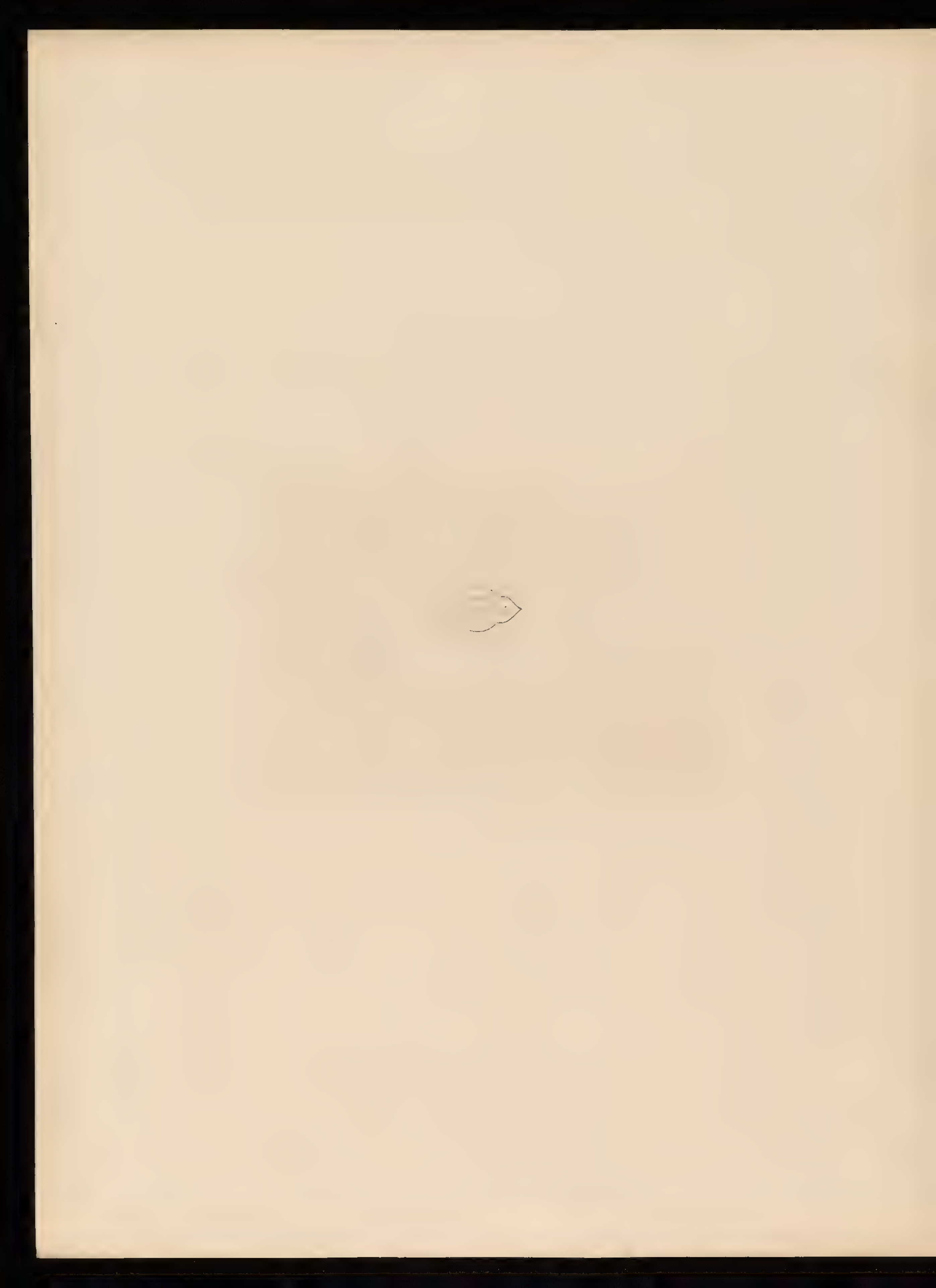
The Cow-herd.





XV. CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN).

Harbour with Lighthouse.





XVI. CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN).
Herd going to the Fields.





XVII. CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN).

Time, Apollo, and the Seasons





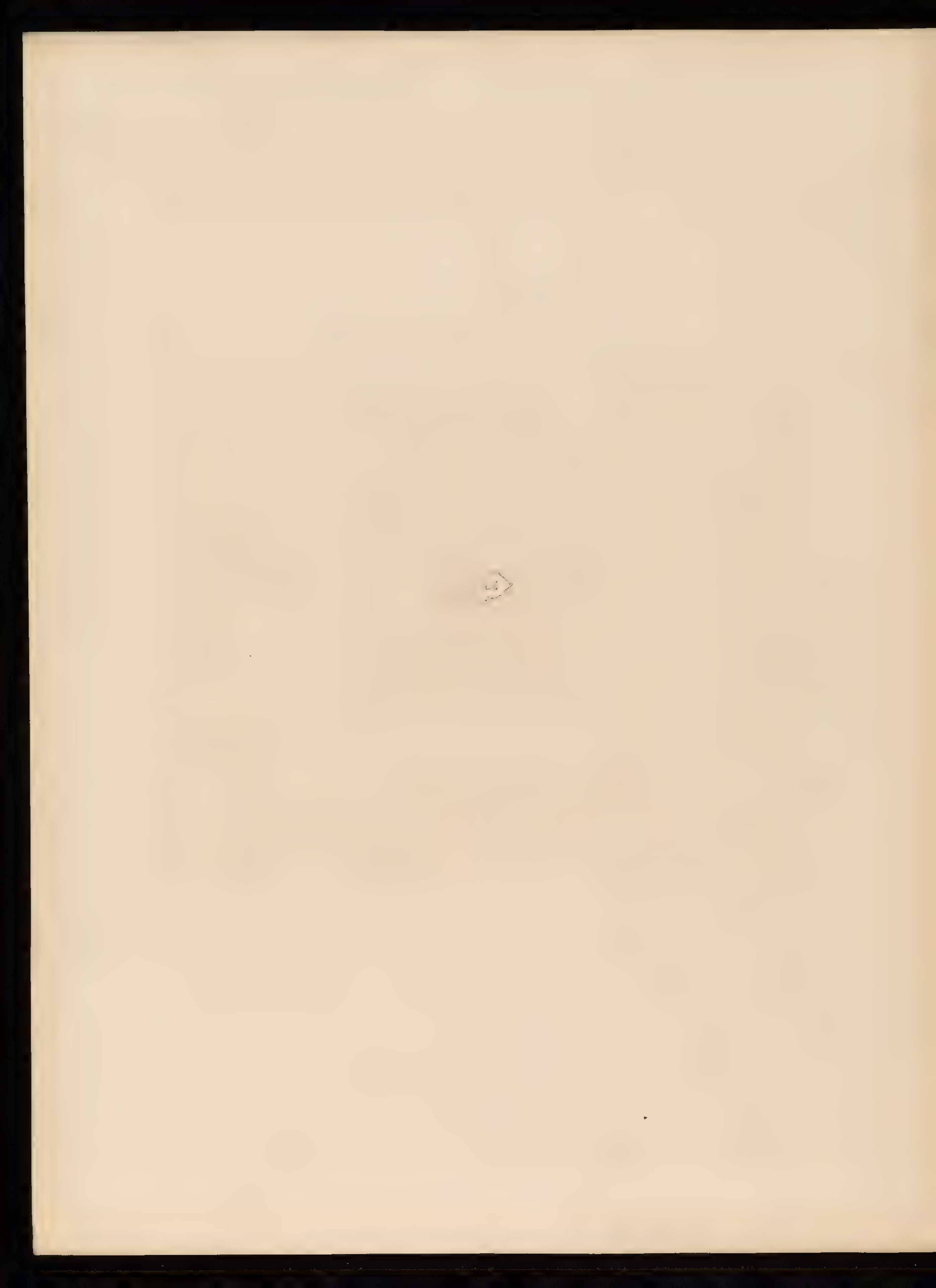
XVIII. CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN).

Rape of Europa





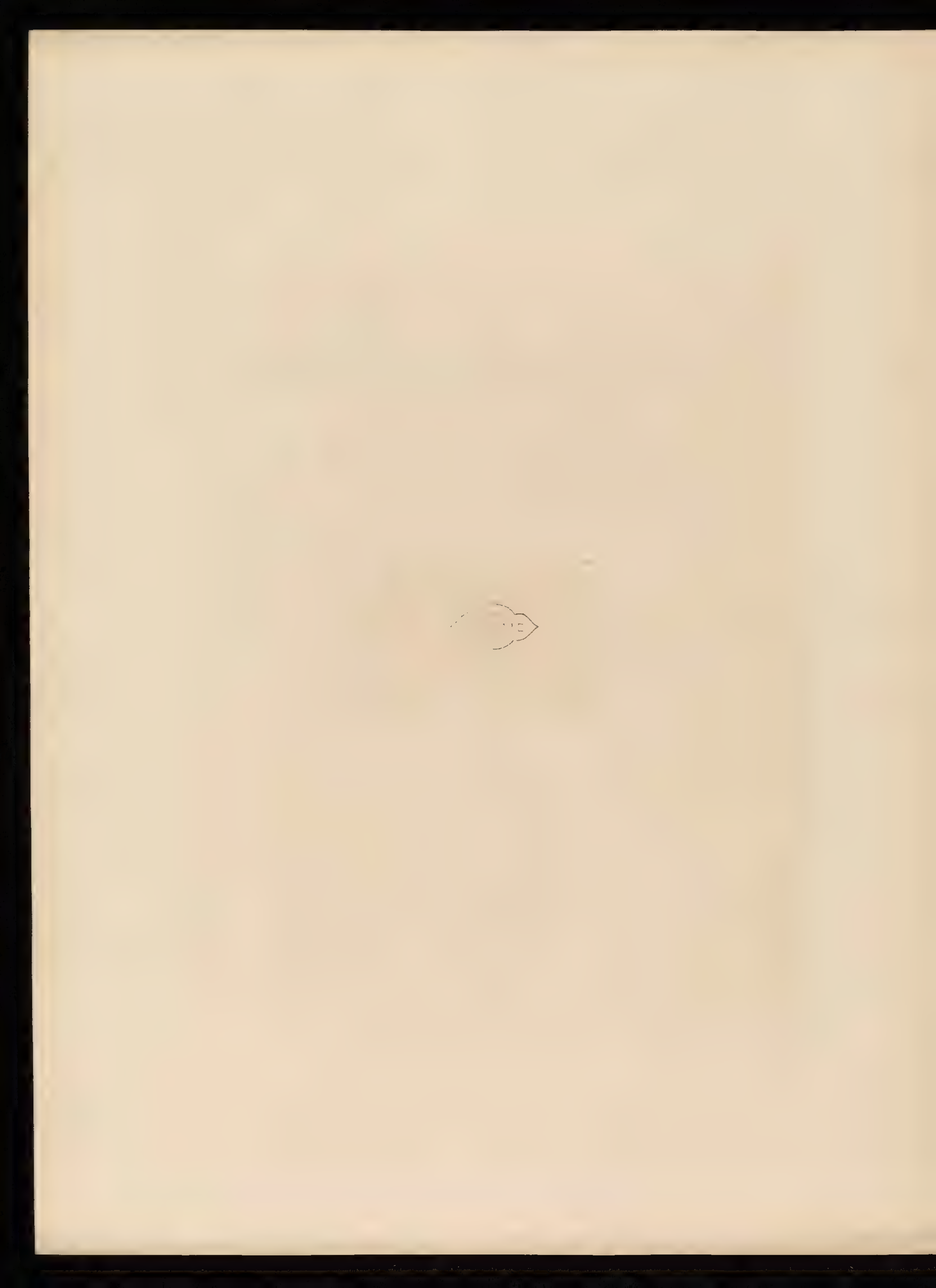
XIX. CLAUDE GELLÉE (LE LORRAIN).
Landscape with Seven Goats.





XX. ABRAHAM BOSSE.

The Expulsion of Adam and Eve.





The Wise Virgins (one of a set





XXII. ABRAHAM BOSSE.

Summer, from a set of the Seasons.





XXIII. ABRAHAM BOSSE.

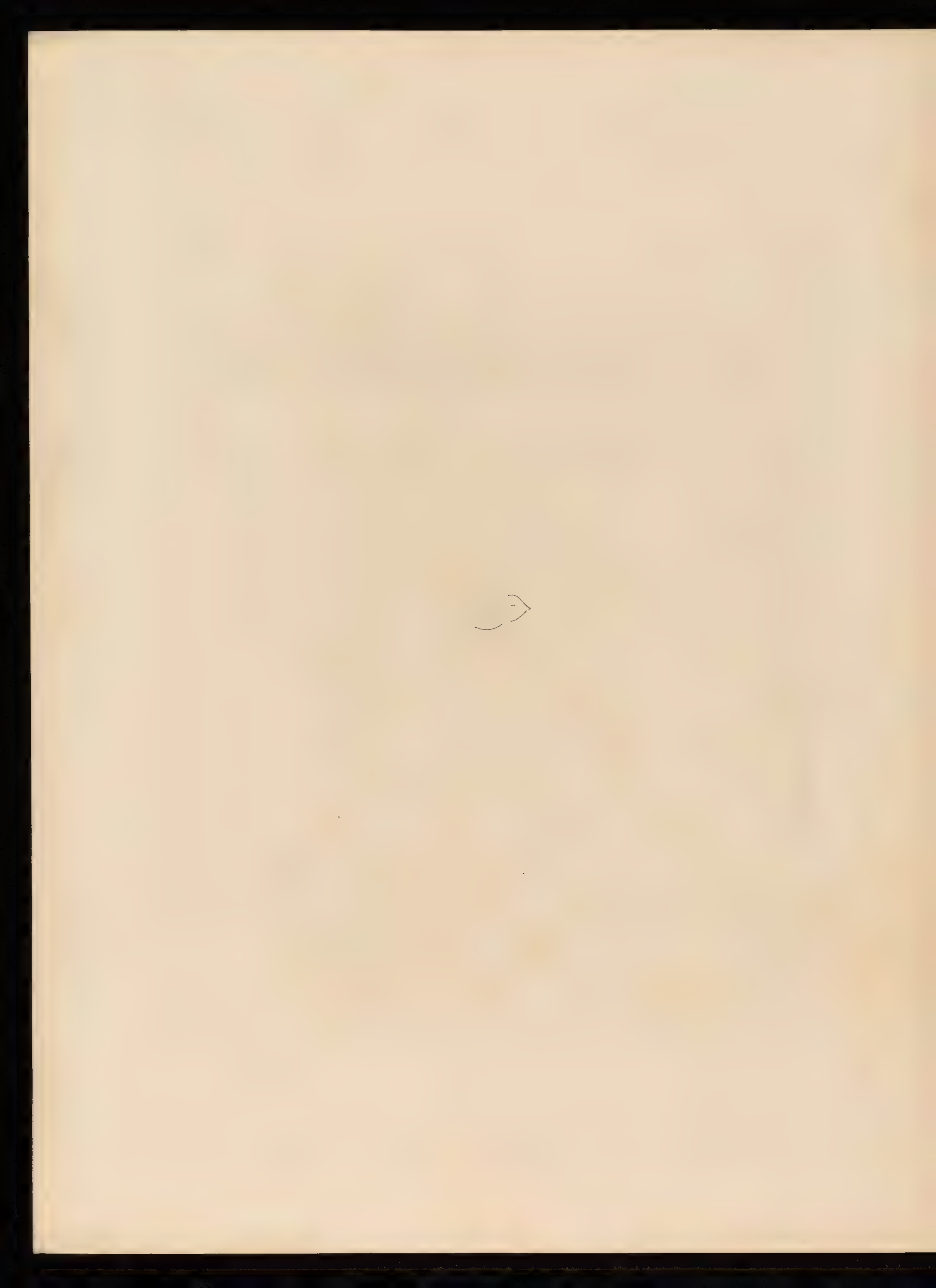
Winter: from a set of the Seasons.





XXIV ABRAHAM BOSSE.

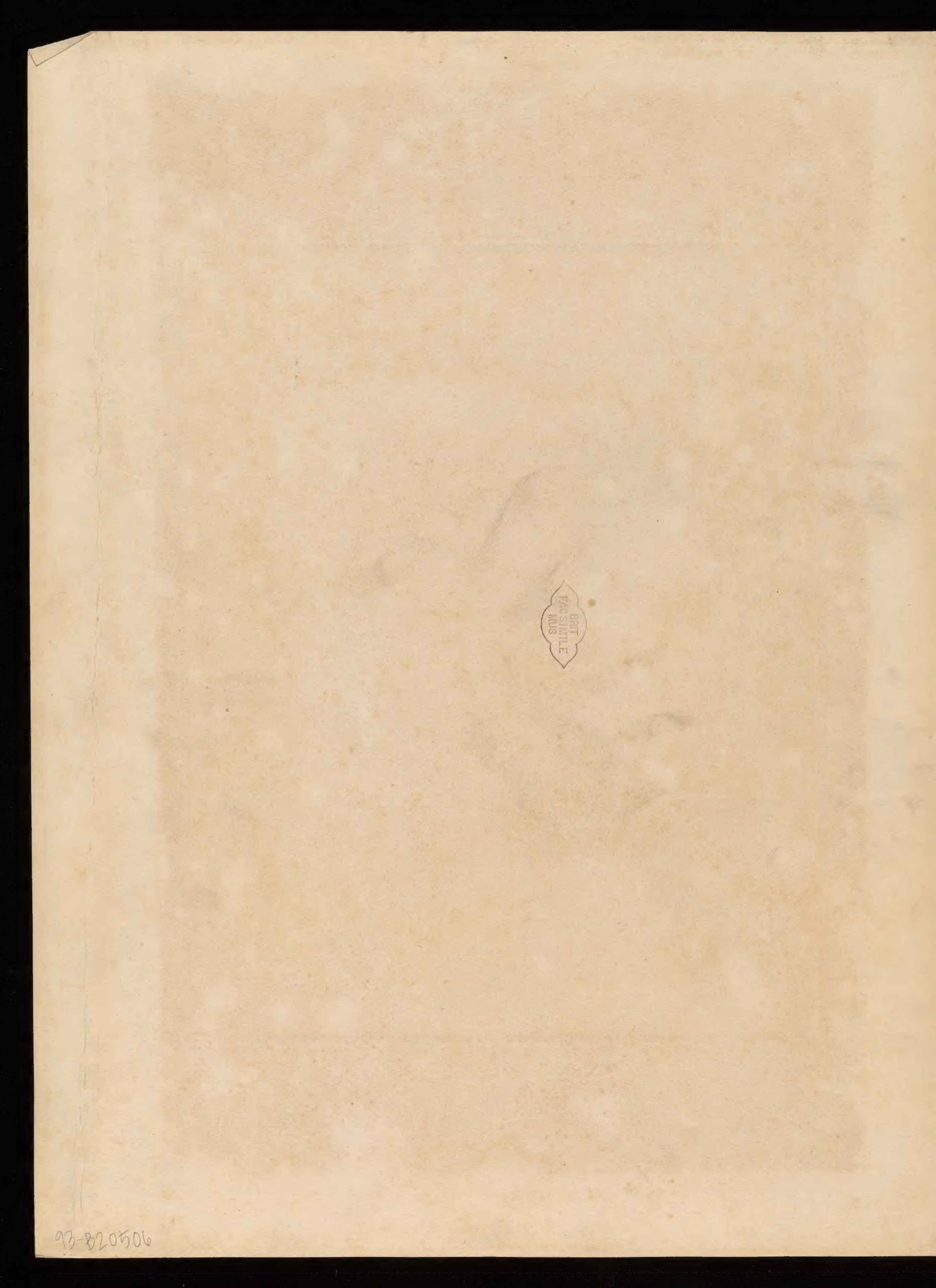
Earth from a set of the Elements





XXV. ABRAHAM BOSSE.

Printing-room at a Line-Engraver's.


BRIT
FACSIMILE
MUS
93-B20506

